

## Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention

In order to support and honor victims of domestic violence, October 2007 has been proclaimed once again by Governor Jennifer Granholm, as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Nationwide communities gather together to remember the strength and courage of domestic violence survivors, honor and celebrate the accomplishments of the domestic violence movement and rededicate ourselves to bringing domestic violence to an end in our communities.

What is domestic violence? Domestic Violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior that is abusive in any relationship that is used by one partner to maintain or gain control and power over another intimate partner. Examples of abuse include:

- Put-downs or name calling
- Physical harm
- Threats of physical harm
- Intimidation
- Sexual assault

Domestic violence can occur to anyone regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can affect people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Domestic violence can occur in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and can happen to intimate partners who are living together, married or dating.

Domestic violence not only touches those who are abused, but also has a significant effect on family members, co-workers, friends, and the community at large.

When children grow up witnessing domestic violence they are very much affected by the crime. Frequent exposure in the home can cause children numerous physical and social problems, and can teach them violence is a normal way of life.

By recognizing and becoming more aware of domestic violence this can and will make a difference in your life, and the lives of your family members. There are many agencies in Michigan and national hotlines that can help. If you are looking for help for someone you know or for yourself, following are some recommended agencies:

1. The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCDADSV) 517-347-7000; TTY: 517-381-8470, is located at 3893 Okemos Road, Suite B-2; Okemos, MI. MCADSV offers information for survivors, provides a comprehensive providers referral list, houses the Michigan Resource Center on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. The Resource Center has a wide selection of books, videos, CD-ROMs and fact sheets on this subject. For more information, visit <http://www.mcadsv.org>.
2. If you want to talk to a trained counselor that can help during a crisis or for support; or if you want information on programs near you, call the National Domestic Hotline (NDV) at 1-800-799-SAFE (7223) TTD 1-800-787-3224. It's free, and is available 24 hours a day. The NDV Hotline staff can tell you where to go for shelter, and social and legal assistance.